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H Y L A S

And Other Poems

EDWIN PRESTON DARGAN



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To
William A. Nitzel,
Christmas, 1914

From the Author

HYLAS

AND OTHER POEMS

EDWIN PRESTON DARGAN



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DEDICATION

*A celle dont la voix ravive l' allégresse,
A celle dont la main sait effleurer le coeur
Sans blesser, pour guérir; à la chère Princesse
Lointaine de l' Azur, du Rêve, du bonheur!*

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HYLAS: AN ELEGY

*"For, sparing of his sacred strength, not often
Among us darkling here the lord of light
Makes manifest his music and his might
In hearts that open and in lips that soften
With the soft flame and heat of songs that
shine.*

*Thy lips indeed he touched with bitter wine,
And nourished them indeed with bitter bread;
Yet surely from his hand thy soul's food
came,*

*The fire that scarred thy spirit at his flame
Was lighted, and thine hungering heart he fed
Who feeds our hearts with fame."*

HYLAS: AN ELEGY

*(In Memory of Algernon Charles Swinburne,
died April 10, 1909.)*

Thy winds have wailed it and thy seas have
borne
The throbbing word: our latest minstrel
leaves
His jewel-isle whose lone Urania grieves.
Thy winds have wailed it and thy seas shall
mourn!
The monarchs are no more—as thou hast
willed;
And England's robe is torn
By desperate hands, her heart has turned
and thrilled,
Her lordliest lion dies, the race of lions is fulfilled.

That dark and lovely crypt spreads not her
gates
For one whose brows no ruler's laurel
crowned;
Scorner of laws and kingdoms, no set
ground
Hallowed by all thy brethren supplicates
Thy dust; no boyhood's angel-seeming
choir
For one who fronted Fates,
Singer of Hertha and stark Life's desire,
No wreaths save those of Proserpine, no requiem but a lyre!

Nay, they have found an ampler place for
thee,
Where hollows of great billows in each
fold
Take sunset-robcs of laminated gold.
Thy fathers' church-yard and thy Mother-
Sea
Shall give their child an airier sweeter rest,
If any rest may be
For feet that trod the mad eternal quest,
For him who once hath known that luring
Cytherean breast.

Thou canst not rest! 'Thou canst not sink
and share
Earth's random immortality, be a bed
For flowers that nodding seawards o'er thy
head
Make thee to yearn and stir; for men de-
clare
Thy churchyard swiftly crumbles to the
wave,
Thy leaping heart shall fare
Forth to remembered tempests; and thy
grave
Shall shudder from thee. Who shall uplift
thee then, and who shall save?

Around thee silver tresses of the storm
Weave perilous spells, and thou shalt be
 the joy
Of lithe and twining naiads that decoy
To the hush'd halls below; as once the
 warm
Dark Ephydatia and the April-eyed
 Nycheia stole the form
Whose bending beauty they had well des-
 cried
Above the pale stream's edge, full-mooned,
 while Mysian shepherds cried:

"O Hylas, Hylas, Hylas!" Then the Chian
Cliffs were dismayed with wrath of Her-
 akles,
And Argo's men on farther toiling seas
Heard their lost hero call, a stricken lion,
"O Hylas, Hylas!", in the sad night, alone.
And now what nymphs of Dian
Shall greet their coming lord, while the
 slow tone
Of grave winds' diapason wakes the loves
 that thou hast known?

O'er brightest waves their gleaming net is
spread—

Félice and Fragoletta and Faustine—

The newer darlings, mutable of mien,
Our fear, our vision! Back from the ban-
ished dead

Come Mary, queen, and Sappho who had
burned

To clasp so dear a head;

Behold thy panther-mistress, whose body
turned

Shark-wise and leapt upon thee for the prey
she took and spurned!

Comes Messalina in her gilded shame,
And all the queens of quivering honeyed
breath,

Planting red love upon the lips of Death.
Fair names and strange we know, but not
the Name

Compact of precious hope and tremulous
woe.

That ravish and reclaim!—

Heard only when our chosen star hangs
low,

Breathed only when our aching arms yearn
for the sunset-glow.

Through bright and bitter waves they bear
thee on—
Sad hard Dolores and wan Proserpine,
Till speeds a maid whose argent shoulders
shine
And lift thee nearer holiest Avalon.
This is the glitter of flashing limbs that dart
From lofty Calydon!
This is thine Atalanta, pure of heart,
Who quells the darker passionate hordes and
leads thee far apart.

O dazzling ramparts broidered by the
wave!
O radiant saintly City of the Sun!
O Avalon, blest isle! Since time begun
Here is the bourne our vaster longings
crave;
Here farthest Deity calls out, "Aspire!"
And chosen spirits lave
Their crimes by splendors of performed
desire,
A Paradise for those alone whose souls have
stormed the fire!

The ramparts gird about an Ivory Tower,
Around which slowly climbs a spiral stair
Trodden by panting heroes that upbear
To cloudy heights, to chasm, throne or
bower

Lamps of undying flames that soar and
scorch—

A Pentecost of power!

Whether from maiden shrine or Stoic
porch

Above some unknown burning God draws and
inspires the torch.

I see thy brothers of the olden faith,
The beauty-blest, the martyrs then as now,
Each haunted poet on whose pallid brow
The Tongue descended; cloud-clad as a
wraith

Great Hugo hurls the thunderbolts of yore,
And child-like Shelley saith:

“Ah, leave me, Tennyson, I can no more!
Hylas, take up the torch which once my
Adonais bore.”

For here thy living fingers seized a brand
Lit by mad Villon in a dungeon's gloom
Long since. As once o'er kindling heather
and broom
Swift runners sped their flame from hand
to hand,
This shalt thou grasp and sweep aloft, till
pain
Of failing arms demand
Proud Landor and Mazzini to sustain,
And ravening vikings that proclaim Equality's
slow reign.

Alas, I cannot sing their Freedom's song!
I cannot cherish all their brotherhood!
For ever in Time's widening courts the
good
Of all is pleaded by a few; the wrong
Of multitudes bedims the golden right.
And shall the blinded throng
Of tame democracy bear down and blight
To dull unloveliness the chosen children of
the light?

Yet with this hope I leave thee—there shall
 spring,
Even while the kindred of our Hylas
 mourn,
A bearer for the torch that must be borne,
A wiser lover, strong to work and sing!
And startled cities from mean sleep arise
 To praise the poet, king,
Enchanter, whose white wand shall hu-
 manize
Dear Beauty, child of God, our waiting sister
 of the skies.

LYRICS

WINGS OF SUNSET

O jewel-star, deriding all desire,
Deride not mine!
Instil in me the golden guarding fire
That twines a shrine—
And press from me the hot praise flaming
higher
Of vine and wine!

Or else, so nobly lonely in thy birth,
Clear evening star,
Imbue in me the mellow dewy mirth
That bore me far,
Then when my heart had felt no mould of
earth,
Nor knew a scar.

* * *

Out from the radiant flame that redly gems
The waste of air,
Two crimson pageants wave, that sorrow
stems
Or still despair;
And these were kings adorned with diadems,
And those were fair!

Two foremost shapes that seem the same to
me
Uplift their hands,
Two voices name the throbbing Name to me
That breaks and brands
All alien loves that laughing came to me
In alien lands.

The frailer figure spoke, a shattered rose,
And stained with rain :
"My name is Abnegation; men my foes
My wit disdain;
They hasten where my taller comrade goes—
My master, Pain."

* * *

The sun forsakes the phantoms as they hover
Adown the sky,
The swift rain smites them never to recover—
The Gleams that die!
A cold blast lashes every wishful lover,
He knows not why.

Before they go the kings have sworn together
Beyond return,
No reborn love shall laugh in April weather,
Howe'er we yearn—
No ashes shall revive their whitened feather
Within the urn.

They pass, they vanish into realms of Doubt,
Save where there flows
Some vapor streamer floating round about;
As once there rose
Excalibur, that carved a kingdom out,
Ere knighthood's close.

"THERE IS A GARDEN"

There is a garden by the summer sea,
Where roses riot all the livelong year,
Where vivid suns retint incessantly
Crimson and green regalias, fresh or sere.
Set in the burning storied South of old,
There is a garden on this Coast of Gold!

Stark aloes rise and glistening palms that
spring
And spread their tops exultant; and I know
Where scent-packed feathery mimosas cling
To passionate oleander-buds aglow.
Where dust-clad leaves droop from the olive-
tree,
There is a garden by the summer sea.

The terraces and marble balustrades,
The pebbled walks, the bowers cool and soft
Are made for dreaming; and the stealing
shades,
The night-winds and the fierce mistral how oft
Have found me yonder where I long to be—
There is a garden by the summer sea!

Beyond the wall the azure waters lie,
Held by the azure hills. The Esterelles
Faint in the sapphire of a cloudless sky;
And one white boat, a fleeting swallow, tells
Of happy song and vision—Italy!
There is a garden by the summer sea.

But when the moonlight seeks the Coast of
Gold

And drives a quivering ruddy serpent's trail
Within the ripples—when the wind grows
cold,

Comes to the garden one who shall not fail,
Black-robed, in witching dance, alert and
free! . . .

There is a garden by the summer sea.

Oh, let my words blow with the breezes there,
And let her shielding pinions close enfold
Warm Memory's body from this wintry air!
There is a garden on the Coast of Gold,
Hinting of heaven—there is a place for me—
There is a garden by the summer sea!

A FRIEND

He who'll accuse me,
Fairly abuse me,
 Make me or mend—
Prosper and drink with me,
Close eyes and sink with me,
 That is a friend.

Knowing my failing,
Spite of my railing
 Never to bend;
Loving the best of me,
Nursing the rest of me:
 That is a friend.

He who will share with me,
Fare with me, bear with me,
 Up to the end;
Willing to lie for me,
All to defy for me,
Asking to die for me—
 That is my friend!

OUT OF THE PAST

I know a song whose words are made of tears,
Shadowy, solemn, sweet;
Borne from the glory of the golden years
Whose tale is now complete.

I know a voice that fills me with its sadness,
So mournfully it seems
Unceasingly to wake the buried madness
Of long-forgotten dreams.

I know a soul which shares with that of mine
The pain of darksome ways,
Which craves and crowns the vanished joy di-
vine
Of happier, saintlier days.

O voice of sympathy, O song of sorrow,
O brave enduring soul,
Somewhere before us in the mystic morrow
A faith shall make us whole.

"SUNT LACHRYMAE RERUM . . ."

You sang, and the words were rounded
pearls—

You ceased, and the night was lead.
The dark crawled in. The Moment was
Captured and smothered and dead.
Oh, melody! Is there a farthest star
To hold the tears where the wonders are?
"Immortal, I bide my Judgment Bar,"
The perishing Moment said.

We kissed, and that was the soonest done,
And little left to do.
Shadow and silence stole across
The face, the flower of You.
Was it the wisest? They alone
Who saw First Void below the throne
And leapt remember—and *we* have known
What falling angels knew.

I swear those pitiful moments die
Like babes, of the after-cold!
They shine like a sudden lantern-flash
On hidden heaps of gold.
The light departs; does the gold remain?
Have you been as Gods? Be as Gods again!
And the pitiful beautiful moments slain
Shall live as of old, of old!

PARAGOT TO JOANNA

Did you weep to find me wandered from the
garden,

When the sun was slumbering low?

Did you wholly scorn me then or did you
pardon

Long ago?

Have you wistfully forgiven me, my lover,

That rival Muse (you said!)—

But the frosts of years have never sought to
cover

Your dear head!

Did you fear that fancy's random spark
would perish,

As you knew my wayward heart?

For I never deemed that household warmth
could cherish

Singer's art!

But oh, my dear, the doubt had fled forever,

When first I worshipped you;

And long before I swore your trust had ever
Kept me true.

Ah, had I come and spoken in the gloaming,

Made you believe I cared,

Had I only sped my fancy in her roaming,

Had I dared!—

We should never think it now a thousand
pities

That the light has left our sky,

We should never dwell apart in stranger cit-
ies,

You and I . . .

If I only could have found you in the garden!

Long ago—

I would ne'er have feared your scorn nor
needed pardon,

When the sun was slumbering low.

LINDOR TO ENRIQUETA

A lying smile and a wayward glance,
A sinner's heart led out for a dance
By the hand of Our Sovereign Lady,
Chance—

Rose-colored the morn,
And so with a laugh the Devil was born.

Sweet Love, God-given, we called him then,
The keeper of treasure for famished men,
Light kisses for arrows, Heart's-chamber his
den—

This the carol we sung,
You and I in the days when the Devil was
young.

The depths of darkness where all men go,
Bitter soul-sorrow which none must know,
And the poisoned fountain's rancorous flow—
Hope lay so cold
In the weary years when the Devil was old.

A flash of light making all things plain,
A blinding flash in a desert of pain—
Life and the kind old world again!
“Delivered!” I cried,
For then in his frenzy the Devil had died.

PELLEGRINI D'AMORE

When we turned,
As we burned,
From the silly city and the black-clad men;
When we started
Throbbing-hearted
For we knew not what—some splendor
glimpsed again—
The stars, tear-seen, shook lances all above
Our last, fleet
Mad, sweet
Adventure in forsaken fields of love.

And the way,
As by day,
Seemed surely to lead out—no matter where!
But the peace
Of release
Made us forget (forewarning of despair)
The satin pall now brooding close above
Our last, mad,
Breathless, bad
Adventure on the hardy hills of love.

Then we stopped,
And I dropped
Your hand, the proper pathway to attain;
Through the dire
Mist and mire
Came shivering loneliness that cut like rain!
Far-seeing gods applauded from above
This mad, last,
Grey, aghast
Adventure in the frozen fields of love.

A DAY OF LOVE

The might of a fierce endeavor,
The pulse of a passion new-born,
The need to do—now or never!
The clasp of hands in the morn,
Ah, sweet!
The clasp of hands in the morn.

A song with glad voices unbroken,
The leaping of hearts in tune,
Love-words, whispered, unspoken,
The touch of the lips at noon,
Ah, sweet!
The touch of the lips at noon,

The wasting of flame into ashes,
(Cold ashes, and who would grieve?)
The downward droop of the lashes,
And the falling of tears at eve.
Ah, sweet!
The falling of tears at eve.

SCHWEIGEN IM WALDE

The world has yet her wonder-spells:
The eyes that are all trust may see
That whispering Dryad hidden in her tree;
 Dead Laura in Elysium dwells,
 And Helen sleeps on asphodels,
 But some one lives for me . . .
And the dear shy violet never tells
What she says to me—what she says to me.

The world has yet her wonder-maids:
Where calm grey beeches stand like towers,
And slender anemones soothe the hours,
 There dance the leaves in flickering shades,
 And sun with shade the soft charm braids,
 And some one waits for me!
In the light that never fades,
She waits for me—she waits for me.

Swiftly before the high hills gloom,
Bury the buds in a small moist tomb,
 Where the yellowing leaves with madden-
 ing whirl
 Dance to the wild winds' skreigh and skirl!
For the powers of outer darkness loom,
The shadows fall—we flee . . .
Shall I never touch that fluttering curl
So near to me—so near to me?

MEDITATIONS

WHOM THE GODS LOVE

Gone with the secret closed upon their lips,
Gone are the best, the beautiful! They saw
No glory where the sullen shadow slips,
They found no pleasure in imperfect law;

Leaving to us the puzzle and the hate,
The compromise that cloaks itself as kind
And human fellowship; ours is the Fate
That would be constant, were she not so blind.

But they—do you not feel their nearness
now?
Do voices hover in the noiseless air?
Those eyes, that saintly smile, that stately
brow,
They speak, they strive to tell us what and
where.

They know! . . . How tense it is! Have
you not heard,
Echoing from the everlasting hills,
Some whisper? Oh! for *one* time-shattering
word,
Cross it our purposes, mar it our wills,

It would outweigh all volumes and all minds
In all the world! We are heavy-fated then.
Each panting soul goes forward till it finds,
And they went farther, found—and heed not
men.

A BLIND MAN SPEAKS

I squandered light when light was meant for
doing;

Now light has left me, and my days are
blank.

What recompense is granted for my rueing?
What spirit still the guileless gods to thank?

The darkened days flit by in swift pursuing,
Bright days and fair for those who still may
mend—

The young on pleasure bent or petty wooing,
The elders, mindful of their latter end,

And those between, who coldly chose ambi-
tion

And those who simply linger in the sun—
All, all can see the flower or its fruition,
The strong, rejoicing in a race begun.

While I—but still there's waiting, wisdom,
learning,

Ears and three senses more! Then, or I rust,
Throw out the coin, and while 'tis in the turn-
ing,

I choose for Contemplation—since I must.

OCEAN

Over a great sea never rent by rudders,
On opal waves whose light withdraws and
 shudders,
A single star hangs heavy from the sky—
Of heaven the one unknown, unwinking eye.
What was the star? Why bends it vacant
 gaze
On that green waste eternal nights of days?

Here comes no mariner, nor king, nor craven;
The endless waters never touch a haven;
The sad star never wept for trust betrayed,
Nor friendship lost, nor beauty-blighted maid.
Ah, who can tell what Builder nailed it there,
To brood alone on waves and empty air!

Here comes no priest, nor any step of lovers,
No voice of God in all that stillness hovers,
No voice of man, nor beam of fulsome sun,
And gulls above and fish beneath are none . . .
No laughter and no murmur and no toil,
No human soul the Nature-soul to soil.

Yet somewhere in that all-unchartered space
The foaming waters angrily give place
For a steep rock that rises rough and jagged,
Coated with mosses, dismal, black and
 ragged;
And round its edge the green waves run more
 whitely,
Lacing a garment for that crag unsightly.

That lonely rock, that faint and stricken star,
Whose gleam unanswered beckons from afar,
The wandering graves beneath, that line of
white—
And Solitude—and Murder—and grey
Fright—
O lonely rock, O luring stricken star,
I fear to whisper what your portents are!

IN THE RAGGED MOUNTAINS

No more of Ocean—evil sea of Hate!
The foam that on thy dreadful winds is
 carried
Comes from pale lips of those whom thou
 hast harried,
And severed hearts moan of a foolish fate
Through all thy minstrelsy; in myriad cries
Thy slain sepultured legions clamor to the
 skies.

But yonder with the silences that dwell
Augustly on the snows that close encumber
Eternal mountains in eternal slumber,
Bowed to deep rest by some world-wizard's
 spell—
There shall I roam with wistful heart and
 free,
A shy and virgin Muse my viewless company.

The mountains! Oh, the mountains! They
 are mine!
Their peaks of azure and of amethyst
Shatter and quell the low and worldly mist;
Aloft their lordly ramparts dare and shine!
My sleeping greyhounds guard the gates
 wherein
Enter ethereal joys and passion purged of sin.

Some seek you in your pure communion
white;
And some, under full-robed waving boughs
of green
Which merry sun-flecks steal and dance be-
tween,
Lie in soft haze, forgetful of the fight,
And mindful only that the month is June—
Far-off, love may be sweet—but sweeter here
to swoon.

And others enter only in the Spring,
Simple and primal souls, friends of Illusion,
Content with colored joy and frank profu-
sion.
What life abroad, what hands that rise and
cling!
What incense-blooms flush and suffuse the
air,
Fragile and holy-born, as is a maiden's
prayer!

For me, when old October crouches down
A tawny tiger on your ample breast,
Watchful of Winter—then, no thought of
rest!
Strength and the sting of winds and skies
that frown!
Is your house swept and bare? Has Death
begun,
When changeless laurel smiles beneath a
brooding sun?

Firm fastnesses of Hope! Enduring gods!
Courage and freedom were your ancient
gifts.

Give more and more to us, whose sick
faith shifts

From truth to dismal doubt, from souls to
clods.

Let the great hills render their high ac-
count:

"Some stars have dwindled—yes! It is
enough to mount."

HOC EXIGUUM

Seemed it such a little time,
Orator of old?
Seems it still a lesser time,
Now your bones are cold?

The world is but the middle term
Of one vast syllogism—
Who would not choose to live a worm,
If crowned with after-chrism?

And all the doings of this earth
Are matters of derision
To him who sees a newer birth
In the very newest vision.

With all my heart! The world is nought;
But how, most noble Pagan,
Could you construct a Christian thought,
While Pan still ruled, or Dagon?

Full fifty years before the age
Such doctrine was preferred
And Plato too O worthy sage,
If you were disinterred;

Confronted with the Fathers there,
What would you have to say?—
That the aeons in the hitherwhere
Still dwarf our little day.

A CREED

Lost in a world whose burden grows
And greatens with the waste of time,
Bound to a mount no mortal knows,
Encumbered ever as we climb—

What hope for him who hears the Voice
To pause, to follow and obey,
If the poor heart that should rejoice
Lies bleeding to the naked day?

Yet listen! It is Beauty's call.
Imperious goddess, art thou near?
To saint and sinner, to us all
Thy worship and thy lips are dear.

Ah, listen! Though the word of faith
Should blur upon the open book,
Though from the past a mournful wraith
Of vengeance and of fear shall look!

Somewhere the beauty made for man
Shall link herself with humankind;
Somehow the song that youth began
Its fuller resonance shall find.

WELTGEIST

I am the eager spirit of the Earth.
Through galloping ages, I have loved to-day
What I have left to-morrow—in hard play
Finding all fair and finding nothing worth.

I am the old authentic spirit of Pain:
I was with light, with Void in her travailing;
I dwelt in the Dawn-clad East and held my
 reign
With shadowy kings that knew not name of
 king.

Stealing upon the tides that never cease,
I saw in ancient Asia sages dream—
Dead eyes and body forgotten—of things
 that seem:
I am the spirit of all-oblivious Peace.

I am the spirit of far-off fluttering Hope:
Between the cloud and the fire I swept the
 land,
A beacon for that race so rare, so banned,
That strayed to Canaan and paused on Si-
 nai's slope.

And I swerved to other sleeping continents,
 where
White isles on the lovely mother Aegean lay;
I saw a new sun rise on Eleusis' bay—
I am the spirit of Beauty and all things fair.

Where was the goddess whom I dared not
greet?

I knew the whole of Helen's heavenly grace,
I loved each darling ringlet round Dian's face,
I followed the lure of Daphne's hurrying feet.

I loosened the girdle of Aphrodite,
I strove and conquered Apollo's perfect form,
And roamed the flowers with Persephone,
And rode with Triton in the mastering storm!

There in the shining isles what songs were
sung,

When only could I be the spirit of Joy,
Of laughing Loves—when all old Love was
young—

When Cupid and Psyche were only girl and
boy!

Swift on the dawning came the hardy morn;
Calmly I wore the cloak of Regulus,
Greatly I bore the heart of Marius,
And fiercely felt the imperial Roman scorn.

I am the spirit of a stalwart Faith:
Clasping the naked cross of Calvary,
The saints have made all hate a memory—
"Forgive" and "Follow me" the Spirit saith.

While even as Fathers prayed the bolt was
hurled,

And hordes invincible stretched their hungry
length

Along the Alpine slopes to cleanse the world.
I am the spirit of bare barbarian strength.

I was a Hun and drained my goblet grim.
I was a Frank and tossed my flaming hair;
And lo! the darkening ages followed dim:
I am the spirit of a still Despair.

I was the spirit of a courtly Love,
When Richard strove from Acre for the
Tomb;
The crescent receded, the red cross rose
above,
When Rudel's yearning sails were blurred
with gloom.

I was reborn and heard the glad surprise
Of ancient lore; I saw the glory spread
That lightens in the rapt Madonnas' eyes—
It shone in England round our kingliest head.

I am the scoffing Spirit that Denied.
Mocking the Mightiest, claiming the law of
Thought,
Rearing a Babel of bodies and houseswrought
Only with hands—for what have ye beside?

I am the spirit of late-begotten Woe,
Self-fed, self-torturing, since first he wept
By harsh Geneva's lake, who sent a flow
Of fiery tears upon a race that slept.

Long since the West to the East was calling.
The East
Answering follows an ever-flying West;
The West for the world has spread an open
feast:
I am the spirit of Liberty, the blest.

Yet all impatient with Progress patent and
plain,
So cruel and crude, I pause; for all is One;
And I could weary of wheels that noisily run,
And I could sigh for the twilight hours again.

Was I not prouder than Caesar in his pride?
Was I not wiser than Plato with his lore?
I could have had Zenobia for my bride,
I could have turned Aspasia from my door!

The kings of the earth were little things to
me,
Making amid the rocking stars my home;
Lapped in the moon's fair fleeces, I would
roam,
Watching my poor world turn and shine and
flee.

Among slain souls of many, I alone
Remember Heaven, and I alone am wise—
Hearing the joy that mingles with the moan,
Seeing the dead face staring toward the skies.

There are many worlds and waters. And
these are mine
And these are ours, and I, your waiting soul,
Hold fast your disinheritance divine,
Knowing the part that merges in the whole,
Saying, How long, O Lord? And no more
wild,
But humble and pleading I almost fear to
speak.
Ye are my brothers and sisters and I am weak.
I am the spirit of a little child.

SONNETS

KEATS

Poet of sunny numbers or of night,
Poet of starry fays and sylvan gloom,
But poet ever of the fadeless bloom
That crowns the brow of Beauty in her might.
He knew what seizures grip us in the fight,
What deadly languors bring us to the tomb—
He knew that in old caverns there is room
For her whose task it is to hold the light.

Over those sacred pages will I pore
Until for me the nightingale shall burn
Her heart out with her song! I see return
Lamia, the many-hued, with Autumn's store
Of finished blisses—Psyche, as of yore,
Pants with the flying lovers round their Urn!

LANDOR

Long years before the great Olympian's altar
Kneeling, you sang his praise. Your incense
 rose
More fragrant far than all the spice that
 blows
From Eastern isles: what cause was there to
 falter?
What need was there with gods of gold to
 palter?
Yours was no hand to stir the puppet-shows,
Theirs was no voice to vex your dear repose,
Your minstrelsy of ancient harp and psalter.

Where is the ardent spirit that will stay
Within the confines of its own domain?
Eager and strong to dare you fell away
Amid the tumult loud and chaos vain.
Then did you know shame, sorrow, anger,
 strife—
The many jangled, tangled chords of life.

“SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE”

Let not the volume fall within your hands,
Save fitly it may greet you—in a mood
As when the weight of dark begins to brood
On common objects and unlovely lands.
Then all inviolate your soul's self stands.
And wild Regret may munch her bitter food,
And Hope resurgent flash her crimson flood
Unheeded, where the voice of Peace commands.

O hour of twilight! Tenderest hour of time!
Then Fancy's form shall pause with folded
wings,
Reverent to know the rapture worship brings;
Then vain shall seem the play of all the arts,
Before these murmurings of a love sublime—
The close-linked flowering of perfect hearts.

MORNING-GLORIES

Few pilgrims for your dewy purple care,
O rambling gentle flower, for me always
Memorial of such early blessed days!
What tender sigh, what depths of voiceless
 prayer
Rise from your fragile campanile there!
Fashioned like ears that crimson at their
 praise,
You shyly tremble from too rude a gaze;
And the loving earth disputes you with the
 air.

Others are more vociferous than this:
There's the hot peony blushing at her bliss,
Quick pansies, whispering of a match begun;
Gay Girasole spins upon the lawn,
Her robes are flaunted at her gallant Sun,
But yours are sparkling with the tears of
 Dawn.

VIOLETS

Violets that are as buried treasure cast
Into the wintry lap of forests old!
Pilgrims of dusky passion that enfold
Within your maiden chalices a vast
Deep sweet of youth! Who would not stand
 aghast
To see a rude foot crush you in the mould?
To scent your soft breath lure him from the
 cold,
Who would not turn, who would not melt at
 last?

Flowers, endue with misty purple haze
The form of one whom many eyes have
 scanned,
The flower of all the flowers of the land!
Show her the modest service of your days,
Teach her to dwell content in woodland ways,
Charming the few who feel and understand.

ROSES

Roses, because your soul is stainless white—
Roses, because your warm blood runneth red
In lips that will not touch them. I have fled
Beyond the crimson mountains of delight,
With feverish winds, towards hotter skies
 bedight
With burning planets—hither have I sped
To pluck you these, where tranquil poppies
 shed
Far safer dreams of drowsiness and night.

Petals that you have torn! A waste of leaves!
Fast-dying fragrance of the sunnier days!
What have dead flowers to do with blank
 November?
She who knew not before will not remember
Now, when the birds no longer sing her
 praise,
When slow sad rain drips dully from the
 eaves.

"A MOMENT'S ORNAMENT"

That whole day in my fancy there had warred
Romantic woodland longings with the great
Sad thoughts of greater souls. "She will
come late,"

They said, but woke in me no warning chord.
Then suddenly upon the moonlit sward
There you were dancing, singing at Joy's
gate!

Was it the heel of undiscerning Fate?
Was it the right hand of a pitying Lord?

It shone above your pale scarf shimmering
bright,

The face that has been known to many men:
A face of ivory tones and dusky light,
With fire-fly eyes that found me through the
night.

Long shall I see you as I saw you then—
A sylph, an Ariel—and a Célimène.

ROSEMARY FOR REMEMBRANCE

Lest I forget the amber of thine eyes
And cumbering years obscure thy wistful face,
And sad expedients rob me of the grace
To claim with candor what I fain would
prize—

Lest duller visions blur the smile that flies
And fleets on parted lips, and would erase
Thy wan charm hesitant, to furnish place
For ordinary faces and their lies—

I store one word, and that not made to last;
One film of gold, and that shall time alloy;
Yet in the night-time when the Needs are
dumb,
And meaner voices for a while succumb,
I say the word, ignoring in my joy
What waste of wrecks may strew the frozen
past.

AL AMOR DEL LUMBRE

Never in haunts of men or hurried mart,
While flaunt the banners of the garish day,
Have I perceived thy presence; though I
 stray
To calmer shades and soothe my fluttered
 heart,
Where life-throbs pulse and urgent fancies
 dart,
Plucked from the ugly fury of the fray—
Not always then, impatient as I pray,
Wilt thou the dream of thy dear grace impart.

No earthly mansion thine—but when the
 hour
Of sleep steals sweetly o'er the baffled soul,
Clasped in the sure arm of some awful power,
The while the unending aeons round me
 roll—
Then, in the rest of home, the peace of night,
Thy radiant robes ~~flash~~ their supernal light.

DREAM OF A TRYST

There is a spot in the soul's country, far
Exalted from the seething of the street,
A place appointed where we two should meet,
Where queenly hearts and kingly powers are.
I dreamt I trod the way with many a scar,
Sick-willed and pale, scant breath and bruised
feet,
Borne onward by the gleam I thought so
sweet,
Immutable, immortal as a star!

They only let look within the gates—
I could not see your face—I turned aside.
“And *she* not there, my wandering one!” I
cried.
“My path was strewn with briers by the fates,
My faith was blind and still I have not
quailed,
But you, why have you failed, why have you
failed?”

FINIS

When you withdrew your hand, those other
hands

That held the lights of heaven in their place
Fell all together, and through saddened space
I heard that clangor, and through darkened
lands.

When you spoke not, my spirit in her bands
Bowed down; that silence smote our earthly
race:

No birds would sing a dirge for our disgrace,
No voice of Christ could lay his high com-
mands.

If nevermore your hand with steadfastness
Uplift that light—if I may not believe
That low and honied voice which did confess
In all my dreams its love—I still shall bless
The sun-crowned hills I saw; though memory
weave

Such grieving words that even you must
grieve.

LUX OCEANO

I

Drawn past the gasping dreams of Doubt and
Wonder,

I was admitted to a hidden bower;
There stood my lady-lily like a tower;
And I, forgetful of the months that sunder,
Of piteous nights, of daily day-time blunder,
Drew near and simply kissed her—Ah, that
hour!

Then certain sullen clouds began to lour
And the swift surf of life swept up in thunder.

Wisdom, if I could hold her fluttering hands
Across the chasm of a thousand miles,
Hear the low voice of her who understands,
And with a sovereign kiss assail her smiles,
How shall that ocean harsh dismay my rime,
How shall I fear that sundering sword of
time?

II

She lingered by that ocean's battling marge,
And chose life's shell and held it to her ear.
Some marvel of strange voices deep and clear
She heard, a symphony subdued yet large.
One voice spoke not—Life left it to my
charge
To flute so wooingly that she must hear
A tale of how a laughing boy could steer
Through sun-touched riotous waves our silver
barge.

"How can I tell," she questioned with a
frown,
"Since to both ears there comes a note of bliss,
Where the true secret and the soul-joy is—
Whether the surge of life or love's renown?"
Over each ear I placed a hand, drew down
Her face most meet for silent ministries.

ALONE

Give up! There is no way to penetrate
Another's soul. Deep-gazing I divine
Far in the waste of eyes I may call mine,
Or in the answering body's clasp elate
With joy and life, the *will* to share our fate—
And what is mine is mine and thine is thine,
And all inquiring fervor must decline,
Ending in after-passion, nearer hate.

Is it a friend who shares your inmost thought?
Heaven pity him! He knows the foam, the
 lees,
The savor; as one thinks he loves the trees
Because October's fading foliage caught
His fancy; best to keep our cells unsought,
Our prisoner's crust, our couch of little ease.

TO A PORTRAIT BY SHANNON

I think that in your bowed head's pensive
pose
Shadow and love and love and shadow meet;
I think those faint eyes ne'er were made to
greet
Man's eyes alight; and yet I know the rose,
The sudden carmine of your visage glows
With wondering hope at sound of hurried
feet,
And his strong arm shall bear you from your
seat,
And your lax form shall start, as under blows.

She seems part dove, part fawn, and all a
maid;
For like the one she stilly waits her love;
And like the other is her pretty fright;
O Lady, let me praise and take delight
From overseas! Fear not, O Fawn, O Dove,
My ardor too remote to make afraid.

“THE GOLDEN ROSE”

In ample Paradise, when all was known
Save Knowledge, and the heavy hinting hours
Stole with a whispered portent past the bow-
ers
Which the first pair had made, Eve stood
alone
One brooding Sabbath noon, when joy had
flown—
Alone, on tiptoe, trampling on all flowers,
And rosy-limbed and reaching for new Pow-
ers,
She plucked a Painted Apple for her own!

On lofty Monserrat, where angels' wings
Swept nearer than we know, we may believe
That One in samite for boys' lips held up—
No Golden Rose—a lowly service-cup.
No Golden Roses live with mortal things;
And Perceval—did he not find his Eve?

A SINGER AT A MATINEE

There was a flush, a flash, a golden note,
A sudden hint of starlight and of eve;
A roll of waters and of winds that grieve
Amid strong triumph pealing from her throat;
Then you were lulled as in a faery boat
On faery lakes, and you were made to leave
All the old lands that lure us and deceive
For lands whereof no mortal ever wrote.

Beside me sat a child. This was her place,
This faery lake! Such light shone from her
face
That knew no world of compromise and pain.
But when the last note brought the burst of
cheers,
The child grew up, shivered and said with
tears,
"Mother, why did she stop? It's day again."

CASAUBON TO DOROTHEA

You liked the statue in the Vatican,
And thought I should have looked with you?

That *we*—

(Oh, Dorothea, had you tried to see
Within the scholar's husk the struggling
man!)

I had my scruples: in this earthly span
Each fleeting form is folly. *Vide* "Key."
(And bitterness was all you brought to me!)
They worshipped mice in Tyre and Hindoos-
tan.

Madam, you could not comprehend; your
mind

Knew neither scholar's doubt nor poet's pain.
(But once I thought her tears were blessed
rain

To draw a budding soul—oh, lost!) I find
In Pope and in Propertius mention kind
Of husk that holds a living golden grain.

NEBULOUS

Is it the mist that crushes us—the dim
Restraining smoke of earth which glides and
 binds,
Mysteriously troubling as it winds?
The sun leers down, an eye without a rim,
That sees too well. Shall we not question him
Of trees phantasmal to our cumbered minds?
Each drifting sound a dubious echo finds.
Music? The frail clear laugh of seraphim!

Veiled are the summits which would doom
 our wills;
But yonder through her vestiture of trees,
Blurring the subtler surer symphonies,
Rushes the vision of Delight that kills—
The slope of shoulders brighter than the hills,
The gleam of eyes more wayward than the
 breeze!

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